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XVIII.—The Stoic Categories as Methodological Principles

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The Stoics used the four categories, *substance*, *quality*, *disposition*, and *relative disposition*, as methodological principles in all three branches of their philosophy. Moreover, in each case the third and fourth categories, *disposition* and *relative disposition*, embraced the most important questions. To the extent that the categories supply a methodological framework common to all three departments of philosophy, they constitute a unifying element. Perhaps they cannot provide an instrument for resolving all the contradictions attributed to the Stoics, but at least they give a clue to that inner unity of which the Stoics themselves boasted.

One of the many paradoxes associated with Stoicism is the puzzling circumstance that although the Stoics themselves claimed that their philosophy was a perfectly unified whole — so well unified indeed that its various parts could not be separated from one another, and the change of a single item would disrupt the whole system,¹ — yet the opponents of Stoicism, even in ancient times, regarded the Stoic philosophy as a mass of inconsistent and incompatible elements.² Since much of our information about Stoicism comes from hostile sources, it is much easier for the modern investigator to find the inconsistencies of Stoicism than its unity. In recent years there have been a number of studies attempting to find the unifying element, but the problem is by no means solved.

The line of inquiry which seems to me most likely to make possible a unitary interpretation of Stoicism is the investigation of the Stoic categories. In a recent study a Spanish scholar, Eleuterio Elorduy, has collected and analyzed a great deal of material on this topic.³ He has examined with great thoroughness the accounts of non-Stoics, especially the Neo-Platonists and the Aristotelian commentators, but he has not tried to show how the

¹ Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 3.74; Sen. *Epist.* 33.5; D.L. 7.40; Sex. Emp. *M.* 7.19.

² Cf., for example, Plutarch's essay, *De Stoicorum Repugnantibus*.

³ E. Elorduy, *Die Sozialphilosophie der Stoa* (*Philologus*, Supplementband 28.3, Leipzig, 1936). On pages viii–xii Elorduy gives an extensive bibliography, to which I should like to add two works that are also concerned with the unity of Stoicism: E. Grumach, *Physis und Agathon in der alten Stoa* (*Problemata* 6, Berlin, 1932); and F. Ogereau, *Essai sur le Système Philosophique des Stoïciens* (Paris, 1885). I should like to acknowledge also the many helpful suggestions I have received from those persons with whom I have discussed various aspects of this paper, especially from my colleagues at the University of Chicago.

categories are used in such genuine Stoic writings as the *Discourses* of Epictetus and the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, in those portions of Cicero's dialogues that are put in the mouths of Stoic spokesmen, or in the summaries and excerpts of Stoic doctrine preserved by Diogenes Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, Plutarch, Galen, and many others. Because of these omissions Elorduy's analysis is incomplete, and he has failed to discover the full import of the categories in the Stoic system.

It is the aim of this paper to show that the four Stoic categories appear as methodological principles in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, in the Stoic passages of Cicero's philosophical works, and in the Stoic fragments. According to Simplicius and Plotinus the four Stoic categories are: first, *ὑποκείμενον*, *substance*; second, *ποιόν*, *quality*; third, *πὼς ἔχον*, *disposition*; fourth, *πρὸς τί πὼς ἔχον*, *relative disposition*.⁴ The significance of these four categories, *substance*, *quality*, *disposition*, and *relative disposition*, has always been unclear, because there is no extant Stoic text which gives a systematic explanation of them, and the Neo-Platonists who discussed them were more anxious to refute than to explain them. The surest approach, therefore, to the understanding of the categories is to examine how they are used in the extant Stoic writings. Fortunately they appear repeatedly in the *Discourses* of Epictetus in almost exactly the same form as that given by Simplicius. The only difference is that the first category is not *ὑποκείμενον*, *substance*, but appears variously as *στοιχεῖα*, *elements*, or *εἶναι*, *existence*, or *τί*, *what a thing is*. Epictetus uses the categories as principles of procedure for the systematic investigation or analysis of various philosophical problems. He tells his listeners, in effect, that in making any analysis they should first find out *what* it is they are dealing with, next its *qualities*, then its *disposition*, and finally its *disposition in relation to something else*. Curiously enough, Epictetus seldom mentions all four categories in a single passage; yet he often lists three of them together, and in every case they appear in a uniform order, identical with the order given by Simplicius.

The methodological use of the categories in the field of logic is indicated in the fourth book of the *Discourses*, where Epictetus is

⁴ Cf. H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (hereafter cited as *SVF*, with references to volume, page, and line) 2.124.28 ff. I call the first category *substance* for lack of a better term; it is, of course, very different from the Aristotelian category of substance. The translations *disposition* for *πὼς ἔχον* and *relative disposition* for *πρὸς τί πὼς ἔχον* will, I hope, be clarified by the material presented in this paper.

speaking of λόγος (reason) as the ὕλη (material or subject matter) of the philosopher.⁵ The speculations (θεωρήματα) of the philosopher, he says, consist in knowing (1) the *elements* of reason (τὰ τοῦ λόγου στοιχεῖα); (2) what is the *quality* of each of these elements (ποῖόν τι ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐστι); (3) how they are *combined with one another* (πῶς ἀρμόττεται πρὸς ἄλληλα); and (4) all that is consequent upon these (ὅσα τούτοις ἀκόλουθά ἐστι). Of these four steps, the first, second, and third clearly correspond to the categories (1) of the elements, (2) of quality, (3) of disposition relative to one another. The fourth step, all that is consequent upon the first three, seems to refer to certain extensions and progressions in the study of logic; and since these extensions would necessarily involve new relationships, they may be considered as further instances of the category of relative disposition.⁶ The category of simple disposition (πῶς ἔχον) is omitted in Epictetus' list, perhaps because any disposition of elements requires a relation between those elements and so falls into the fourth category.

A partial parallel to Epictetus' steps appears in Seneca's *Moral Epistles*, where logic is said to include the study of *proprietales verborum, structura*, and *argumentationes*.⁷ If the *verba* are considered as the *elements*, the *proprietales* correspond to Epictetus' *quality*, and the *structura* and *argumentationes* to the *combinations with one another*. But Seneca's formulation of Stoic logic is far too narrow. Seneca was thinking of logic primarily in terms of its usefulness to a rhetorician,⁸ and rhetoric was in the Stoic view the art of speaking well.⁹ Stoic logic, however, included not only rhetorical problems,

⁵ Arr. *Epict.* 4.8.12, *SVF* 1.16.19.

⁶ For possible examples of such extensions, see below, pp. 250, 252.

⁷ Sen. *Epist.* 89.9.

⁸ The rhetorical character of Seneca's statement is evident from the fact that the terms *proprietales verborum, structura*, and *argumentationes* all occur in writings on rhetoric, whereas one of these terms, *structura*, so far as I can discover, was not a technical term of either dialectic or grammar in Seneca's time. *Structura* was used of style by the rhetoricians, particularly of prose rhythm; cf. Cic. *Brut.* 33; *Or.* 149; Quint. *Inst. Or.* 1.10.23; 8.5.27; 8.6.67; 9.4.45. Seneca's scheme, moreover, corresponds closely to Cicero's statement of the usefulness of Chrysippean logic to the orator in *Orator* 115 (*SVF* 2.43.3): . . . noverit primum vim, naturam, genera verborum, et simplicium et copulatorum (= Seneca's *proprietales verborum*); deinde quot modis quidque dicatur (corresponds to Seneca's *structura*); qua ratione verum falsumne sit iudicetur; quid efficiatur e quoque, quid cuique consequens sit, quidque contrarium (= Seneca's *argumentationes*).

⁹ *SVF* 2.95.18 ff.; that rhetoric was considered by some Stoics as a part of logic is indicated in D.L. 7.41, *SVF* 2.18.22.

but the general study of oral and written language (*φωνή* and *λέξις*).¹⁰ The Stoic Diogenes of Babylon wrote a work *On Speech* (*Περὶ Φωνῆς*) in which he classified the letters, or *elements*, of written language (*λέξις*), indicated the differences, that is, the *qualities*,¹¹ of *λέξις* (written language), *λόγος* (significant discourse), and *φωνή* (oral language), and differentiated also the parts of speech. He then added a list of the virtues (*ἀρεταί*) of discourse, such as brevity and appropriateness. That these virtues are on the level of disposition or relative disposition is indicated not only by the fact that virtue in an ethical sense is explained as a *πὺς ἔχον*,¹² but also by the manner in which they are characterized. Appropriateness, for instance, is expression proper to the subject matter (*λέξις οἰκεία τῷ πράγματι*); brevity is expression containing only what is necessary for revealing the subject matter (*λέξις αὐτὰ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα περιέχουσα πρὸς δῆλωσιν τοῦ πράγματος*); clarity is expression that presents the thought in a recognizable fashion (*λέξις γνωρίμως παριστῶσα τὸ νοούμενον*). Since this work of Diogenes of Babylon is not extant, we cannot of course know to what extent it followed the scheme of the categories; but the brief summary of it in Diogenes Laertius¹³ conforms remarkably well to Epictetus' pattern.

That the notion of *element* is variable according to the problem to be investigated and has no fixed reference is shown clearly by a passage in Galen, according to which letters are the elements of syllables and words, but words are called by Chrysippus the elements of discourse.¹⁴ Thus words fall under at least two categories, as relative dispositions of letters, and as elements of discourse.

The province of logic embraced not only words, but also that which is signified by words; this the Stoics called *λεκτόν* (that is, the thing said, or the meaning). As in the case of speech, Diogenes' brief presentation of the Stoic treatment of the *λεκτόν* reveals the familiar steps enumerated by Epictetus: first, *what* is a *λεκτόν*;¹⁵ second, what are the *qualities* of the various kinds of *λεκτά*, including a discussion of kinds of sentences and the differences between them;¹⁶

¹⁰ D.L. 7.55 ff.

¹¹ Differences are equivalent to qualities; cf. SVF 2.126.20: τὸ κοινὸν τῆς ποιότητος . . . διαφορὰν εἶναι οὐσίας. Cf. also SVF 2.128.33 ff.

¹² See below, p. 261.

¹³ D.L. 7.56–59, SVF 3.213–14.

¹⁴ SVF 2.45.7.

¹⁵ D.L. 7.63.

¹⁶ D.L. 7.63–70.

third, *how they are combined* in reasoning.¹⁷ In the latter part of Diogenes' discussion the element shifts from the λεκτόν (meaning) to the ἀξιῶμα (proposition), which had originally been introduced as one kind of meaning.¹⁸ This shift from meaning to proposition, like the shift noted above from letter to word, indicates that the analysis has reached a higher level; and Diogenes proceeds to differentiate classes of propositions,¹⁹ coming finally to the discussion of their various combinations in compound propositions.²⁰ At this last stage appear problems of consequence and contradiction; that is, the question of the relative disposition of propositions to one another.²¹ A still higher level of analysis is reached when λόγος, or *reasoning*, becomes the subject of analysis, and various kinds of λόγοι are differentiated, and their relations indicated. At this level appears the discussion of the syllogism. The λόγος is itself a combination of several propositions, being defined as a composition of premises and conclusion (σύστημα ἐκ λημμάτων καὶ ἐπιφορᾶς).²² The forms of reasoning are characterized as cogent (περαντικοί) or not cogent (ἀπεραντοι), syllogistic (συλλογιστικοί) or non-syllogistic (ἀσυλλογιστοι), true or false, etc.²³ At this level the inquiry is entirely concerned with the relation of the parts of λόγοι to one another and to the actual objects to which they refer. This discussion, then, which is the culmination of the study of logic, is entirely within the category of relative disposition.

Epictetus' statement of the various steps to be followed in the study of logic is general enough to apply to all these problems about words, speech, and reasoning, as in each case there are certain *elements* with certain *qualities* and capable of various *combinations with one another*. The progression of inquiries from simpler questions to those of greater complexity (as illustrated especially in the progression from meaning to proposition to reasoning) may well be an example of Epictetus' fourth step: all that is consequent on the first three. Caution should of course be observed in drawing

¹⁷ D.L. 7.71-82.

¹⁸ D.L. 7.63; cf. Alexander's statement that ἀξιῶματα are the ὑποκείμενα of logic: SVF 2.20.6.

¹⁹ D.L. 7.69, SVF 2.66.5.

²⁰ D.L. 7.71, SVF 2.68.12.

²¹ Galen even preserves the phraseology of the fourth category in his discussion of the relation of propositions to one another (SVF 2.68.31): . . . μήτε ἀκολουθίαν ἔχει πρὸς ἄλληλα μήτε μάχην ἀποφατικήν.

²² D.L. 7.45, SVF 2.77.4.

²³ D.L. 7.77 ff., SVF 2.77.20; cf. Sex. Emp. M. 8.411 ff., SVF 2.78.4.

the conclusion that Epictetus' statement was intended to refer to such methodological procedures as those hitherto discussed, since Epictetus gives little indication of his meaning, and the reconstruction of the Stoic procedure in the various inquiries that constitute logic has been pieced together from fragments and abridgments. Yet the indications, scant as they are, that the same general pattern was followed in a variety of inquiries, have a cumulative value; and the probability of a uniform schematism will become still greater as further evidence is collected.

The discussion of the criterion of truth, which the Stoics included under the general heading of logic, also appears to have followed Epictetus' scheme. The criterion of truth is the *καταληπτική φαντασία*, that is, an appearance which carries with it the apprehension of its object.²⁴ There can be little doubt that the peculiar character of this *apprehensible appearance* is its relative disposition to its object, since it is such that if the object did not exist, the appearance would not be what it is.²⁵ The discussion of the criterion, then, belongs to the third stage of the inquiry, and it should be preceded by the first two. Fortunately Sextus says explicitly that this is the case: "We shall know it (i.e. the apprehensible appearance) after we have first come to know what an appearance is according to them (i.e. the Stoics), and what are its specific differences."²⁶ To be sure, Sextus is here speaking for himself, but it is to be expected that in giving an exposition of the Stoic doctrine he followed the order of presentation used by the Stoics themselves. If this is the case the investigation falls into the usual three steps: first, *what* is an appearance;²⁷ second, *what* are the *different kinds*;²⁸ third, *what* is their *relative disposition*.²⁹

²⁴ D.L. 7.54, SVF 2.33.3; Sex. Emp. M. 7.227, SVF 2.22.28. For convenience I shall call this an *apprehensible appearance*.

²⁵ Sex. Emp. M. 7.248, SVF 2.25.33 = 1.18.7: ἡ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη, ὅποια οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος.

²⁶ Sex. Emp. M. 7.227; SVF 2.22.30: ταύτην δ' εἰσόμεθα πρότερον γνόντες τί ποτέ ἐστι κατ' αὐτοὺς ἡ φαντασία καὶ τίνες ἐπ' εἶδους ταύτης διαφοραί.

²⁷ Sex. Emp. M. 7.228-241.

²⁸ Sex. Emp. M. 7.242-247.

²⁹ Sex. Emp. M. 7.248-260. But even the simple appearance is not an ultimate starting-point, for the appearance is itself defined in terms of an alteration (*ἀλλοίωσις*) of or impression (*τύπωσις*) on the soul (D.L. 7.50, SVF 2.22.23). Furthermore Antiochus, who took much of his philosophy from the Stoics, explained appearance in terms of disposition (*διατιθέμεθ' ὡς τὴν ὁψιν*: Sex. Emp. M. 7.162, SVF 2.24.29). So in a larger sense the whole problem of sense-perception and the criterion of truth

Consequent upon the determination of the criterion arise even more complex problems involving the use of the criterion. The assent (*συγκατάθεσις*) to an apprehensible appearance (*καταληπτική φαντασία*) is called by the Stoics apprehension (*κατάληψις*);³⁰ and knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) is defined as apprehension that is sure and unshaken, incontrovertible by reason (*κατάληψις ἀσφαλὴς καὶ βέβαιος, ἀμετάπτωτος ὑπὸ λόγου*).³¹ Apprehension, therefore, is a disposition (assent) of a person toward an apprehensible appearance, and knowledge is likewise a disposition of the mind. The nature of this last step is confirmed by Sextus' statement that according to the Stoics all knowledge is a disposition of the ruling part of the soul, as a certain disposition of the hand is considered to be a fist.³² Thus the successive steps in the investigation of the problem of knowledge constitute a series not unlike that which dealt with reasoning, and in each case Epictetus' simple scheme expresses the framework.

If the preceding analysis and interpretation of Epictetus' brief comment on logical inquiry are correct, certain important conclusions may be drawn about the Stoic categories. In the first place, the distinctions made by the categories are used methodologically to differentiate a series of steps by which an investigation may be carried through to the end. The question, "What is an appearance?" is prior in the order of inquiry to the question of the relation of appearances to other things; but a full account of the nature of appearances cannot be given apart from their qualities and relative dispositions. Thus the fourth category, that of relative disposition, marks the completion of the investigation, and it embraces in a sense the preceding steps. Hence the Stoic categories are in an ascending order: the last stage of the inquiry is the most important; and since the relative disposition of things to each other, according to the Stoics, determines the nature of the things related,³³ the

falls under the category of the disposition of the soul, but within that larger context the investigation proceeds according to the scheme of the categories.

³⁰ Sex. Emp. *M.* 8.397, *SVF* 2.30.6.

³¹ *SVF* 2.30.34.

³² Sex. Emp. *M.* 7.39, *SVF* 2.42.24: *πᾶσα δὲ ἐπιστήμη πῶς ἔχον ἐστὶν ἡγεμονικόν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ πῶς ἔχουσα χεὶρ πυγμὴ νοεῖται.*

³³ That is, the thing would not exist or be what it is if the relation were altered, as in the case of the *καταληπτική φαντασία*. Cf. the statement of Simplicius, *SVF* 2.132.38: *καὶ γὰρ τὰ μὲν πρὸς τί πῶς ἔχοντα ἀδύνατον καθ' αὐτὰ εἶναι ἢ κατὰ διαφοράν. ἐκ γὰρ τῆς πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσεως ἡρτῆται μόνως.*

question, "*What* is a thing?" is not fully answered until we have answered the question, "What is its *relative disposition*?"³⁴

A second important conclusion is that of all the various possible relative dispositions of things, there are certain ones with which the Stoics are mainly concerned. From all appearances they single out the *apprehensible* appearance as of special importance; from all forms of reasoning, the *conclusive* form. In each case the essential feature of the relation is that it sets up some kind of necessary connection between things, by virtue of which the first requires the second, and if the second is absent, the first is absent also. The occurrence of the apprehensible appearance requires the existence of the object it represents, and if the object did not exist, the apprehensible appearance would not occur. Likewise, a hypothetical proposition is true when the denial of the second member would contradict the first,³⁵ and reasoning is valid when the conclusion follows from the combination of the premises.³⁶ It is the task of the logician to investigate these necessary connections, and to make them the bases of epistemology and of logical reasoning.

It will be shown hereafter that these same conclusions apply to Stoic physics and ethics. In both of these fields the inquiry proceeds from *substance* or *existence* to *quality*, then to *disposition*, and finally to *relative disposition*; and in both fields the last two steps of the inquiry establish those relations which are determinative of things.

There are in Epictetus two indications of the use of the categories as methodological principles in that part of philosophy which the Stoics called physics. In Book Four of the *Discourses* Epictetus says that the parts of the universe are for the sake of the whole. The universal order, he continues, is hard for men to grasp; but as a rational animal man has certain starting points for reasoning about the whole of things: first, the fact that man is a part (*μέρος*

³⁴ I do not mean to imply that the categories are used only as methodological principles, but simply that this is one of their uses. I believe also that it is their fundamental use. But some passages imply that the categories have an absolute reference to different kinds, or levels, of reality. For example, Diogenes says (D.L. 7.61, SVF 1.19.28): ἐννόημα δέ ἐστι φάντασμα διανοίας, οὔτε τι ὄν οὔτε ποιόν, ὡσανεὶ δέ τι ὄν καὶ ὡσανεὶ ποιόν, οἷον γίνεται ἀνατίπωμα ἵππου καὶ μὴ παρόντος. Here τί apparently is used in a physical sense, and means "something real"; for there is no reason why an ἐννόημα is not τί in a methodological sense. Elorduy, *op. cit.* (see note 3), 92 ff., attempts to interpret the categories in exclusively physical terms.

³⁵ D.L. 7.73, SVF 2.70.23.

³⁶ Sex. Emp. M. 8.415-417, SVF 2.78.15.

ἐστὶ); second, that he is a part with a certain quality (ποῖόν τι μέρος); and third, that it is proper for the parts to yield to the whole (τὰ μέρη τοῖς ὅλοις εἶκειν ἔχει καλῶς).³⁷ These correspond to the categories of existence, quality, and relative disposition (the part yielding to the whole). Marcus Aurelius, possibly under the influence of Epictetus, makes a similar series of points, but he has jumbled the order. According to Marcus, "You should always remember these things, (1) what is the nature of the whole, and what is my nature, (2) what is the relative disposition of the one to the other (πῶς αὕτη πρὸς ἐκείνην ἔχουσα), (3) what is the quality of the part, and what is the quality of the whole whose part it is (ὁποῖόν τι μέρος ὁποίου τοῦ ὅλου οὔσα), and (4) that there is no one who prevents you from doing always and saying what is consequent upon the nature of which you are a part."³⁸ Here the first and third points may be correlated with the first two points of Epictetus' scheme, whereas the second and fourth items of Marcus' list would be equivalent to the yielding of part to whole that Epictetus mentioned in third place. So it is clear that both Marcus and Epictetus state the relation of man to the universe in terms of the Stoic categories.

The second instance of the use of the categories in physics is also concerned with the relation of man to the universe, but this time from a theological starting-point. Epictetus says that we must learn first that God exists (ὅτι ἔστι θεός) and that he is provident of all things; then, of what quality the gods are (ποιοὶ τινες εἰσίν). For men must try to the best of their ability to make themselves similar to the gods.³⁹ A bit further on Epictetus restates the series, asking: 1. What is the universe, and who governs it? 2. What is his quality? 3. How does he arrange the universe? 4. Does man have some relative disposition toward him?⁴⁰

In the third book Epictetus gives a shortened form of this same scheme. He asks: "Does God neglect his own services, his ministers, his witnesses, whom alone he uses as examples to the untutored, that (1) he is (ὅτι καὶ ἔστι), and (2) he arranges all things well (καλῶς διοικεῖ τὰ ὅλα), and (3) he does not neglect human affairs (οὐκ ἀμελεῖ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων), and (4) that there is no evil

³⁷ Arr. *Epict.* 4.7.6 f.

³⁸ M. Ant. 2.9.

³⁹ Arr. *Epict.* 2.14.11 f.

⁴⁰ Arr. *Epict.* 2.14.25: τί ποτ' οὖν ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος, τίς αὐτὸν διοικεῖ; . . . (27) ποῖός τις καὶ πῶς ὁ διωκῶν; ἡμεῖς δὲ τίνες ὄντες ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγονάμεν καὶ πρὸς τί ἔργον; ἀρά γ' ἔχομέν τινα ἐπιπλοκήν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ σχέσιν ἢ οὐδεμίαν;

for a good man in life or after death?"⁴¹ Here the first, third, and fourth categories may be recognized. The category of quality is for some reason omitted. The final statement, that there is no evil for a good man, is a consequence of the preceding, and is therefore an extension of the theological inquiry.

Epictetus' use of the categories in this theological context has a remarkable counterpart in the second book of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*. Cicero divides this book, which presents the Stoic point of view, into four main sections: first, *esse deos*; second, *quales sint*; third, *mundum ab his administrari*; fourth, *consulere eos rebus humanis*.⁴² Thus Cicero and Epictetus make identical use of the four Stoic categories as principles of methodology.

These examples of the use of the categories in physics corroborate the general conclusions drawn from their use in logic. The first category is enlarged somewhat to include not only the inquiry *what* a thing is, but also *that* it is.⁴³ Clearly the four categories as Epictetus uses them are not classifications of kinds of things, for if they were, God could not be discussed under all four. The fact that God may be discussed under the first category does not mean that God is without qualities or relations; it simply means that the discussion of the existence of God may be prior to the discussion of his qualities, and the discussion of his qualities prior to the discussion of his relation to men. Presumably anything, whatever its nature, could be analyzed in the successive steps laid down by the categories.

It is also clear that, as in the case of logic, the final steps in the theological inquiry, providence and the relative disposition of God to man, are the most important for the understanding of the nature of the universe and man's place in it. The existence and character of things are determined by providence or by fate (which is the same thing from another point of view); and the causal relations that exist between objects in the physical world correspond to the relation of consequence between propositions in logical analysis. It would require a separate study to work out fully the use made of the categories, especially that of relative disposition, in Stoic physics. The few passages cited here serve only to show that the

⁴¹ Arr. *Epict.* 3.26.28.

⁴² Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 2.3.

⁴³ E.g., in 2.14.11 Epictetus had spoken of learning "that God exists"; in 2.14.25, of learning "what the universe is and who arranges it."

categories were used as methodological principles in this field of inquiry.⁴⁴

Since Epictetus' primary concern was ethics, it is to be expected that instances of the use of the categories are much more frequent in this field. The fourth category, *πρός τί πως ἔχον*, is by far the most common, as it is used by Epictetus, and also by Marcus Aurelius, for the formulation of ethical questions. The whole of moral conduct, for Epictetus, consists in attaining and preserving the proper disposition toward the world. Accordingly, he speaks of disposition toward desire and aversion (*πῶς ἔχεις πρὸς ὀρεξίν καὶ ἑκκλίσιν*),⁴⁵ disposition toward blindness and deceit,⁴⁶ toward the body,⁴⁷ toward affairs,⁴⁸ toward death,⁴⁹ toward the things that happen to us.⁵⁰ Marcus Aurelius likewise speaks, for example, of disposition toward public affairs⁵¹ and disposition toward death.⁵²

Thus the problems of ethics may be formulated in terms of the category of relative disposition. But in the further investigation and analysis of these problems the other categories are frequently employed. In analyzing the relative disposition of man to things, Epictetus finds it necessary to examine the nature both of man and of things. In the opening sections of the *Encheiridion* there is an analysis of things which, according to Simplicius' commentary on the *Encheiridion*, follows the scheme of the categories. Epictetus states first, what things are in our power, and what things are not in our power (*τίνα τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, καὶ τίνα τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἐστὶ*); second, what is the quality of each of these two classes of things (*ὅποια ἐκάτερά ἐστι*); and third, what is their relative disposition

⁴⁴ Elorduy, *op. cit.* (see note 3) 92-101, has attempted to correlate the four categories directly with certain basic physical concepts, such as corporeal and incorporeal, or active and passive, saying, for instance, that *πῶς ἔχον* is *incorporeal*, and *ποιότης* is *active*. These correlations are very confusing, to say the least, and they can be avoided once it is recognized that the categories have a special role that places them on a different level of analysis.

⁴⁵ Arr. *Epict.* 2.1.31.

⁴⁶ Arr. *Epict.* 1.20.12.

⁴⁷ Arr. *Epict.* 4.1.80.

⁴⁸ Arr. *Epict.* 4.1.85.

⁴⁹ Arr. *Epict.* 3.26.3.

⁵⁰ Arr. *Epict.* 3.13.8. These are a few out of many instances of the formula, *πρός τί πως ἔχον*. The instances are even more numerous if we include such similar phrases as *περί τί πως ἔχον* (e.g. 1.20.12; 1.11.4); *πρός τί πως διατεθῆναι* (4.7.6); *πρός τί πως διακεῖσθαι* (2.1.29); *πρός τι πεφυκός* (3.1.3; 3.24.83); *πρός τι σχέσις* (3.13.8).

⁵¹ M. Ant. 1.17.5.

⁵² M. Ant. 9.3.3.

toward us (ὅποιαν ἔχοντα πρὸς ἡμᾶς σχέσιν).⁵³ Elsewhere, in talking of things that are alien to us, Epictetus says that it is not in our power (1) to have them or not to have them, or (2) to have those of a certain quality, or (3) those of a certain disposition.⁵⁴ Similarly Epictetus says in the first book of the *Discourses* that in ethics we are not concerned with the quality or the disposition of fields, slaves, horses or dogs, but only of our own opinions.⁵⁵ The scheme of the categories is discernible, then, in the discussion of those objects that have a bearing on ethical problems.

The analysis of the nature of man's role in ethical relationships also involves the use of the categories. Man's moral actions (καθήκοντα) are determined by his relative dispositions to things (τὰ καθήκοντα ὡς ἐπίπαν ταῖς σχέσεσι παραμετρέϊται).⁵⁶ These dispositions may be considered on several distinct levels. Epictetus says, "Moral actions, then, are threefold: some are related to being, others to the quality of being, and others are themselves the actions of primary importance."⁵⁷ The first two items of this series clearly correspond to the first two categories, and so we may expect the third item to correspond to either the third or the fourth category. The moral actions or duties of primary importance include those acts of desire and aversion, of inclination and disinclination, such as political activity, marriage, worshipping the gods, caring for one's parents, that are in accordance with our nature;⁵⁸ and it is our nature to be free, noble, possessed of a sense of shame.⁵⁹ Epictetus explains the importance of the third class of moral actions by comparing men with silver carvings. In such objects it is not the silver, but the workmanship that is most highly valued. Likewise in the case of the hand, it is not the flesh that is the substance of the hand, but its functions, that are most important. Thus man's

⁵³ Simp. *In Epict.* 1.3, page 16 Duebner.

⁵⁴ Arr. *Epict.* 4.1.129: ἂ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὐτ' ἔχειν οὔτε μὴ ἔχειν οὔτε ποιὰ ἔχειν ἢ πως ἔχοντα.

⁵⁵ Arr. *Epict.* 1.11.38.

⁵⁶ Epict. *Ench.* 30; cf. Arr. *Epict.* 4.4.16; 4.12.16; also M. Ant. 1.12: τὰ κατὰ τὰς πρὸς τοὺς συμβιούντας σχέσεις καθήκοντα.

⁵⁷ Arr. *Epict.* 3.7.25: οὐκοῦν καὶ καθήκοντα τρισσά· τὰ μὲν πρὸς τὸ εἶναι, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὸ ποιὰ εἶναι, τὰ δ' αὐτὰ τὰ προηγούμενα. Cf. the note to this passage in the edition of Schweighauser, 2.2.642 f.; also Bonhöffer, *Die Ethik des Stoikers Epictet* (Stuttgart, 1894) 205; and G. Nebel, "Der Begriff des Καθήκον in der alten Stoa," *Hermes* 70 (1935) 439-60.

⁵⁸ Arr. *Epict.* 3.7.26.

⁵⁹ Arr. *Epict.* 3.7.27.

matter, or flesh, should not be prized, but rather those moral actions that are of primary importance.⁶⁰

These same levels of moral actions recur in other Stoic texts with some variations of detail. Fronto gives a scheme which is almost identical with that of Epictetus. He divides *officia* into *rationes tripertitae*: (1) *prima species substantiae, ut sit*; (2) *altera qualitatis, ut talis sit*; (3) *tertia rei, ut rem ipsam, cuius causa superiora officia suscepit, expleat*. He goes on to explain that the first *officia* have to do with self-preservation; the second are adapted to the quality of each person, and are not the same for all; whereas the third constitute the end of all action, the practice of wisdom.⁶¹

A similar scheme appears in Cicero's *De Officiis*: in primis autem constituendum est quos nos et quales esse velimus et in quo genere vitae.⁶² Here the *quos* and the *quales* are again easily identifiable as the first two categories, and the phrase *in quo genere vitae* refers to the choice of a way of life, such as the choice Hercules made when confronted by Voluptas and Virtus.⁶³ This third step is fairly close to Fronto's practice of wisdom and Epictetus' *προηγούμενα*, and it could be considered either as disposition or as relative disposition.

Still further clarification of this series may be derived from the third book of the *De Finibus*, where Cicero puts in the mouth of Cato an exposition of Stoic ethical theory. Cato discusses first the behavior of men as animals, to whom mere self-preservation is the sole concern. This is, he says, the first *officium* (*καθήκον*).⁶⁴ But on a subsequent and higher level man acts according to his quality as a man, that is, his reason, and he then comes to a conception of right and wrong; and the *officia* encountered on this higher level become more highly prized than those original *officia* from which they first arose.⁶⁵ Although Cicero differentiates only two levels here, yet he clearly has in mind a scheme analogous to that of Fronto and Epictetus. It seems safe to conclude, then, that Epictetus' *καθήκοντα πρὸς τὸ εἶναι* correspond to the *primum officium*

⁶⁰ Arr. *Epict.* 3.7.24 f.

⁶¹ Fronto, p. 140 f. Naber, *SVF* 3.138.33. As the text of this passage is preserved only in fragments, many points of interpretation are unclear. The similarity to Epictetus was pointed out by Nebel, *op. cit.* (see note 57) 459–60.

⁶² Cic. *Off.* 1.117.

⁶³ Cic. *Off.* 1.118.

⁶⁴ Cic. *Fin.* 3.20.

⁶⁵ Cic. *Fin.* 3.22 f.

of Cicero and fall under the first category; that the *καθήκοντα πρὸς τὸ ποιᾶ εἶναι* correspond to the *officia* proper to the qualities of men, and fall under the second category; and that the *προηγούμενα* are the *officia* proper to the choices and inclinations that constitute the dispositions of men toward things (that is, the fourth category).

The doctrine of *personae* presented in Cicero's *De Officiis* springs from a similar analysis of the various levels of men's actions. Cicero says that each person has four *personae*. Two of these are given us by nature, of which one is common to all men in so far as they are rational, the other is different for each person, in accordance with his individual character.⁶⁶ The third and fourth *personae* are added to these, the third being imposed by circumstance or time, the fourth arising from our own choice.⁶⁷ In terms of the categories, the first two *personae* belong under quality, which is here divided into common qualities (that is, qualities common to all men) and individual qualities. That the Stoics made this distinction between the *κοινῶς ποιόν* and the *ιδίως ποιόν* is known from other sources.⁶⁸ The third and fourth *personae*, involving as they do the individual's disposition toward objects external to himself, correspond to the *προηγούμενα* mentioned above and are therefore to be assigned to the fourth category. Thus there is no *persona* to correspond to the first level of moral action, and the second and third levels are both subdivided. Nevertheless the basic scheme that underlies the enumeration of *personae* is in agreement with Epictetus' hierarchy of moral actions.⁶⁹

Epictetus also uses the concept of *πρόσωπον*, but he nowhere differentiates kinds of *πρόσωπα*, and he usually applies the term to an individual playing his role like an actor on the stage.⁷⁰ Although his use of the concept does not conflict with Cicero's, yet

⁶⁶ Cic. *Off.* 1.107.

⁶⁷ Cic. *Off.* 1.115.

⁶⁸ See SVF 2.130 f. M. Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos* (Oldenburg, 1872) 118–20, discusses this distinction at some length.

⁶⁹ Seneca (*Epist.* 85.35) differentiates two *personae*, one general and the other individual, which have certain resemblances to Cicero's scheme. The pilot of a ship shares with all aboard the *persona* of *vector*; but the *persona* of pilot is peculiar to himself. There is some discrepancy between our sources in the classifications of *officia* and *personae*. Fronto, *loc. cit.* (see note 61), uses the pilot (and probably also the orator) to illustrate *officia* arising from the qualitative differences of individuals, whereas Cicero would certainly consider that the pilot as well as the orator illustrates a *cursus vivendi* and therefore belongs to the fourth *persona* (*Off.* 1.115 ff.).

⁷⁰ Arr. *Epict.* 1.2.30; 4.2.10, etc. Only in 3.22.69 (*τὸ τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ πρόσωπον*) does the term appear to be used in a general sense.

it fails to reveal the same schematism. There is in Epictetus, however, a dichotomy of *σχέσεις* that can be correlated with the *personae*. *Σχέσεις* are either natural (*φυσικαί*) or acquired (*ἐπιθετοί*),⁷¹ just as Cicero's *personae* were natural (the first and second) or added (the third and fourth). Natural *σχέσεις* are those in which our qualities as men are the decisive factor in determining our actions, as in our relations to our parents, brothers and sisters, and our offspring; acquired *σχέσεις* are those which involve in addition our circumstances and our choices, as in the relation of friends to one another. The duties appropriate to these two kinds of *σχέσεις* are different in character, for, as Simplicius explains, children should honor their parents because of the natural relation between them, regardless of their wishes or circumstances, whereas the duties toward a friend are terminated if the friendship ceases.⁷²

In so far as man's various *personae* or *σχέσεις* determine his proper actions (*καθήκοντα*), there is a kind of ethical determinism in Stoicism. The wise man is the man who is able to see what actions follow from his nature and his situation. As this is a relation of "consequence," it requires the same kind of reasoning that the logicians use in inferring a conclusion from given premises.⁷³ This rational process is accompanied by an impulse (*ὁρμή*), which is a movement of the soul toward some object (*φορὰ ψυχῆς ἐπὶ τι*),⁷⁴ arising from the appearance of duty.⁷⁵ Impulses, then, like duties, are on various levels: the first impulse of all animals is toward self-preservation, and the rational control of *ὁρμή* occurs at a higher level.⁷⁶

If an impulse exceeds the proper measure and is not guided by reason, it is a passion (*πάθος*);⁷⁷ and as such it interferes with the performance of proper actions, since a person who has an excessive impulse, as Chrysippus says, is not persuaded by reason.⁷⁸ Impulse and passion, then, are further aspects of the relative disposition of man to things, and at the same time they are themselves characterized by a relative disposition to reason.

⁷¹ Arr. *Epict.* 3.2.4; 2.14.8; 4.8.20.

⁷² Cf. Simp. *In Epict.* 30, page 83 f. Duebner.

⁷³ I have argued this point at length in "The Logical Structure of the Ethics of Epictetus," *CPh* 38 (1943) 112-125.

⁷⁴ *SVF* 3.40.6.

⁷⁵ Sen. *Epist.* 113.18, *SVF* 3.40.17.

⁷⁶ D.L. 7.85 f., *SVF* 3.43.2.

⁷⁷ *SVF* 3.92.4 ff.

⁷⁸ Quoted by Galen, *SVF* 3.114.11: *μὴ εὐπειθῶς ἔχειν πρὸς αὐτόν*.

In general, virtue and vice are analyzed as dispositions of the soul. According to Chrysippus, the soul has certain parts, and it is good or bad according to the disposition of its parts: "Ἔστι δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς μέρη, δι' ὧν ὁ ἐν αὐτῇ λόγος συνέστηκε καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ διάθεσις. καὶ ἔστι καλὴ ἢ αἰσχροὶ ψυχὴ κατὰ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν μόριον ἔχον οὕτως ἢ οὕτως κατὰ τοὺς οἰκείους μερισμούς."⁷⁹ Plutarch says that for the Stoics virtue is itself a disposition and power of the governing part of the soul: τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς διάθεσιν τινα καὶ δύναμιν.⁸⁰ Thus virtue is defined in terms of the third category. According to Sextus' account virtue is ἡγεμονικὸν πῶς ἔχον.⁸¹ Seneca uses several such formulas: *virtus autem nihil aliud quam animus quodammodo se habens*; ⁸² *iustitia quid est? . . . animus quodammodo se habens*; ⁸³ *. . . fortitudo, id est animus quodammodo se habens*.⁸⁴ Knowledge also is for the Stoics a disposition of the soul.⁸⁵

In so far as the virtues are different from one another, they may be discussed under the category of quality. The Stoics made elaborate classifications of virtues and vices.⁸⁶ Also, since virtues involve a relative disposition of soul to things, they may be discussed under the fourth category. The Stoic Aristo maintained that virtue is actually one, and that it is called by many names according to its relative disposition (κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τι σχέσιν); whereas Chrysippus wrote a work to prove that the virtues differ qualitatively in their own essences (ἐν ταῖς οἰκείαις οὐσίαις ὑπαλλαττομέναις κατὰ τὰς ποιότητας).⁸⁷ Plutarch assigns to Zeno the two supposedly incompatible views that the virtues differ qualitatively from one another (πλείονας κατὰ διαφοράς), and that virtue, being one, differs only in its relative dispositions to things (ὥς μίαν οὖσαν ἀρετὴν, ταῖς

⁷⁹ Quoted by Galen, *SVF* 3.122.3-6. L. Stein, *Die Psychologie der Stoa* (2 vols., Berlin, 1886-1888), regards the category of πῶς ἔχον as of central importance in the Stoic analysis of the soul. He believes that it was used most extensively by Chrysippus: cf. 1.49, 104 note, 165, 168, 174-5; 2.175-6, 181, 337.

⁸⁰ *SVF* 3.111.14-15 = 1.50.1; cf. *SVF* 3.63.34; 3.25.21.

⁸¹ *Sex. Emp. M.* 11.23.

⁸² *Sen. Epist.* 113.2; cf. 113.24.

⁸³ *Sen. Epist.* 113.7.

⁸⁴ *Sen. Epist.* 113.11.

⁸⁵ *Sex. Emp. M.* 7.39, *SVF* 2.42.24 f. (quoted above, note 32). The variation here between *animus* (ψυχή) and ἡγεμονικόν is of no special importance, as the later Stoics often used ψυχή as a synonym for ἡγεμονικόν; see Bonhöffer, *Epictet und die Stoa* (Stuttgart, 1890) 110.

⁸⁶ Cf. *SVF* 3.63 ff., 96 ff.

⁸⁷ *SVF* 3.62-63. *Plut. St. Repug.* 1041c, *SVF* 3.70-71 indicates that even Chrysippus used the formula of the fourth category in discussing virtue, as in the phrases, πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς οὕτως ἔχουσιν . . . πρὸς τοὺς πλησίον ἔχει οὕτως.

δὲ πρὸς τὰ πράγματα σχέσεσι κατὰ τὰς ἐνεργείας διαφέρειν δοκοῦσαν).⁸⁸ It seems that the opponents of Stoicism tried to detect some inconsistency in the fact that the Stoics discussed the virtues in terms of the three categories of quality, disposition, and relative disposition, whereas the Stoics themselves would probably regard this procedure as normal.

The governing part of the soul (ἡγεμονικόν), whose dispositions constitute the various virtues, is itself subjected to examination in terms of the categories. Marcus Aurelius asks himself three questions about the ἡγεμονικόν that correspond to three of the categories: (1) What (τί) is my governing part? and (2) Of what kind (ποιόν) am I now making it? and (3) For what (πρὸς τί) am I now using it?⁸⁹ The soul itself, of which the ἡγεμονικόν is a part, is, according to the Stoics, πνεῦμά πως ἔχον.⁹⁰ The constitution of a person, which includes the union of soul and body, is explained by Seneca in the formula of the fourth category: principale animi quodammodo se habens erga corpus.⁹¹ This category is also used to account for chance, which is "a certain disposition of men toward causes."⁹²

This use of the third and fourth categories as formulas for analysis and definition of concepts occurs in physics as well as in ethics. All existing things, including the four elements (fire, air, water, earth), are dispositions of some underlying matter.⁹³ Even God is ὕλη πως ἔχουσα.⁹⁴ So also quality is πνεῦμά πως ἔχον or ὕλη πως ἔχουσα.⁹⁵ These formulas suggest that things are differentiated from one another in so far as they are different dispositions of the underlying matter. But again there are various levels of dispositions. For example, one passage cited above says that soul is a disposition of πνεῦμα, whereas another passage says that virtue is a disposition of the soul. Moreover it is likely that πνεῦμα, in turn, was considered to be either a disposition or a relative disposition of fire and air, for we are told that it is a mixture of these two elements.⁹⁶ And fire and air, of course, are dispositions of an even more basic matter.

⁸⁸ Plut. *St. Repug.* 1034c-d, *SVF* 1.49.27. Cf. also Sen. *Epist.* 66.7: sed (virtus) in alias atque alias qualitates convertitur ad rerum quas actura est habitum figurata.

⁸⁹ M. Ant. 10.24.

⁹⁰ *SVF* 2.146.23; cf. Sen. *Epist.* 50.6: Quid enim est aliud animus quam quodammodo se habens spiritus?

⁹¹ *Epist.* 121.10.

⁹² *SVF* 2.281.13: ἐν τῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὰ αἷτια ποιᾷ σχέσει τὴν τύχην εἶναι.

⁹³ Plotinus in *SVF* 2.115.20.

⁹⁴ *SVF* 2.113.30; 2.115.22.

⁹⁵ *SVF* 2.126.27; cf. 2.132.3.

⁹⁶ *SVF* 2.146.3-4.

In conclusion, then, it is clear that in all three branches of their philosophy the Stoics used the categories as methodological principles, not restricting them to one area or one level of analysis only, but applying them to any subject whatever. Moreover, in each of the three departments of their philosophy the third and fourth categories, disposition and relative disposition, embraced the most important questions. In logic the Stoics were concerned with those dispositions of propositions toward one another which made possible valid reasoning. In physics the Stoics were concerned with the various dispositions of matter, and with the relative disposition of man to God. In ethics they analyzed the relative dispositions of men to things and to one another, and the dispositions of the soul on which these relations depended. To the extent that the four categories supply a methodological framework common to all three branches of philosophy, they constitute a unifying element. Perhaps they cannot provide an instrument for resolving all the contradictions attributed to the Stoics, but at least they give a clue to that inner unity of which the Stoics themselves boasted.

